

3/14/70

Dear Dick,

My mail was heavy today, we had company, so I've been and am pressed for time. I want to stop to get the latest reports on the Bronx case, where I have already detected too much, though I had no plans for interesting myself in it. I had several letters from Howard. One of them is a carbon of his letter to Lifton, at your suggestion.

I regard this as a serious error in judgement from which it is not possible for good to flow. And it is to throw Howard to a wolf with a broken toothpick for defense. If you have been fortunate in not having had the experiences Gary and I, among a number, have had with Lifton, I believe we did give you enough of an idea, so I am quite surprised that you did this.

This disturbs me very much. My letter to Howard urging him not to enter into any correspondence with Lifton could not have reached him in time and, with a different recommendation from each of us, at best confronted him with a choice he was in no position to make, since he feels he can trust each of us and our judgement.

I think neither of you has the faintest idea of what Lifton is and of what he is capable - and his nefarious skills. I will not add to what I have already told you, but if there is the slightest doubt in your mind, please ask Gary, who was put through the mill by this entire matter. It matters little whether Lifton is the way he is from sickness or a more sinister reason, the fact is that he is entirely- totally-without scruple, is thoroughly dishonest and with all is very bright. He is quite clever, and few catch on until too late. There is a long record of such people. I am far from the first. I seem to be an exception in that I did nothing to cause it.

Anything he is sent he is capable of twisting, distorting, misrepresenting in ways you would have difficulty believing if you saw it. Again, Gary has quite a record on this - only because Dave made one of his few mistakes and got overconfident. I challenged Gary to a confrontation when Gary was ignoring his sinister campaigns and Gary decided to accept that challenge. When he confronted Dave with as total and overwhelming a refutation as one could ever expect more, I suggest than would ordinarily be possible- Dave just shut up and wrote Gary off.

He has strange love/ hate influences and is able to maintain relationships with people who hate him, of whom Newcomb is a prime example. Fred is another animated disaster. But you should see what he has written me of Dave. Yet he maintains a friendly relationship and seems, whatever it is, to do Dave's bidding.

Were none of this true, there is almost no way Howard could not better spend his time than in correspondence with Dave, for it is not possible to get anything dependable from him.

You know my high opinion of Howard's intelligence. With it I tell you he is not capable of dealing with Dave, of detecting what Dave is up to, etc. I think it quite possible the same is true of you. No reflection on your intelligence. It is just that you are a) honest and b) are not experienced in dealing with such types. Although I know nothing of the correspondence between you - didn't know there was one- I will not be surprised if you learn that Dave was able to figure out what you did not intend to tell him and is missusing or has misused it.

I regret this very much. I think it a big mistake.

Sincerely,